# Preventing the Measles with the MMR Vaccination

The best way to protect against measles is to get the measles-mumps-rubella vaccine (or MMR vaccine). Doctors recommend that all children get the MMR vaccine. Additionally, in 2017, Army Medicine clinics throughout Europe began giving the MMR vaccine as part of the routine 6-month visit with their pediatrician. The vaccine is highly encouraged for all children aged 6-12 months, especially those in day care and is in addition to the two doses given to children in the U.S. over 12 months of age.

## Why should my child get the MMR vaccine?

- Protects your child from measles, a potentially fatal disease, as well as mumps and rubella.
- Prevents your child from getting an uncomfortable rash and high fever from measles.
- Keeps your child from missing school or childcare (and keeps you from missing work to care for your sick child).

## How well does the MMR vaccine work?

MMR vaccine is very effective at protecting people against measles, mumps, and rubella, and preventing the complications caused by these diseases. **Two doses of** MMR vaccine are 97% effective against measles and rubella, and 88% effective against mumps.

## Is the MMR vaccine safe?

Yes. The MMR vaccine is very safe, and it is effective at preventing measles (as well as mumps and rubella). Vaccines, like any medicine, can have side effects. But most children who get the MMR vaccine have no side effects. Getting MMR vaccine is much safer than getting measles, mumps, or rubella disease.

According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) “MMR vaccine has been linked with a very small risk of febrile seizures (seizures or jerking caused by fever). Febrile seizures following MMR are rare and are not associated with any long-term effects. Because the risk of febrile seizures increases as infants get older, it is recommended that they get vaccinated as soon as recommended. Some people may experience swelling in the cheeks or neck. MMR vaccine rarely causes a temporary low platelet count, which can cause a bleeding disorder that usually goes away without treatment and is not life threatening. Extremely rarely, a person may have a serious allergic reaction to MMR vaccine. Anyone who has ever had a life-threatening allergic reaction to the antibiotic neomycin, or any other component of MMR vaccine, should not get the vaccine.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates the risk of mild reactions such as low-grade fever as occurring in 5% to 15%. The risk of a febrile seizure at approximately 1/3000 doses. The low platelet count described above occurs in 1 in 30,000 to 40,000 doses. More severe reactions, such as severe allergic reactions, occur in 3.5 to 10 per million doses.

## What should I do if I have a reaction to the vaccine?

Look for anything that concerns you, such as signs of a severe allergic reaction, very high fever, or unusual behavior. Signs of a **severe allergic reaction** can include hives, swelling of the face and throat, difficulty breathing, a fast heartbeat, dizziness, and weakness. These would usually start a few minutes to a few hours after the vaccination.

## What should I do?

If you think it is a **severe allergic reaction** or other emergency that can’t wait, call 112 and get to the nearest hospital. Otherwise, call your health care provider.

## Is there a link between the MMR vaccine and autism?

No. Scientists in the United States and other countries have carefully studied the MMR vaccine. None has found a link between autism and the MMR vaccine.

**Who should not get this vaccine?**

Tell your vaccine provider if the person getting the vaccine:

- Has any severe, life-threatening allergies.
- Is pregnant, or thinks she might be pregnant.
- Has a weakened immune system.
- Has a parent, brother, or sister with a history of immune system problems.
- Has ever had a condition that makes them bruise or bleed easily.
- Has recently had a blood transfusion or received other blood products.
- Has tuberculosis.
- Has gotten any other live vaccines in the past 4 weeks.
- Is not feeling well. A mild illness, such as a cold, is usually not a reason to postpone a vaccination. Someone who is moderately or severely ill should probably wait. Your doctor can advise you.

Source: https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/ (website access date 28 Aug 2018)